

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we begin a new school year, the _____ School District is asking for your help to protect your children, their friends, schoolmates and community from the H1N1 flu virus that has sickened so many people worldwide. H1N1 is contagious and spreads easily and quickly in gathering places such as schools. **Parents and schools working together with guidance from the Panhandle Health District and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can weaken H1N1's reach.**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is working to get an H1N1 flu vaccine ready for use in the fall. Vaccinating your children against the common seasonal flu and H1N1 will help your children and our schools stay healthier.

School closures are unlikely unless the virus is widespread and many children are absent. If the virus changes in severity, schools may close to stop the outbreak's spread. It's good to have a plan for child care at home in case schools do close.

Please be sure your school has all your up-to-date phone numbers in case the school needs to reach you. If you call school to report your child's absence, please specify the reason to help us monitor H1N1. School nursing staff will aggressively enforce sick policy. Sick children will be sent home. If your child has been home with flu-like symptoms please do not send them back to school until 24 hours after a fever is gone **without** the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. Ibuprophen, Tylenol). The school district will keep families informed of H1N1 cases in the schools as they become known.


Here's how you can help protect yourself and your family against H1N1 influenza and seasonal influenza, the common flu that circulates yearly. Help prevent the spread of viruses by teaching your children to:

- Wash their hands often and well. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Stay home and not go to child care or school when they are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into their sleeve/elbow and not into their hands if they don't have a tissue.
- Dispose of used tissues promptly in the trash.
- Not share food, utensils or beverages with others.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Always follow doctor's instructions and take medicine as prescribed.

Please check with your doctor, health clinic or Panhandle Health District if you have questions. The CDC also has a 24-hour phone bank at 1-800-CDC-INFO.

You can stay up to date with current flu conditions at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/, www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov or www.phd1.idaho.gov/emergency/emergencyindex.

Your superintendent,,
Superintendent, SD ###



Jeanne Bock,
Panhandle Health District Director